United Nations A/55/64

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 April 2000
English
Original: Russian

Fifty-fifth session
Item 74 of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Letter dated 14 April 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a statement issued on 14 April 2000 by the Acting President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir V. Putin, in connection with the ratification of the Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT-II) and of the package of 1997 agreements on anti-missile defence by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly under item 74 of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) S. **Lavrov**

* A/55/50.

00-39693 (E) 190400 190400

Annex to the letter dated 14 April 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement issued on 14 April 2000 by the Acting President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir V. Putin

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation has just adopted a decision on the ratification of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, more commonly known as the SALT-II Treaty, as well as the package of 1997 agreements on anti-missile defence. This is a wise and important decision. It is important both in terms of the national interests of our State and the interests of international peace and security as a whole.

For the Russian Federation, the conclusion of the SALT-II Treaty provides it with an opportunity to guarantee its security on a parity with the United States of America — with a lower level of strategic offensive arms than before and with half the number of arms as under the SALT-I Treaty, which is currently in force, and, of course, at less expense.

The ratification of SALT-II opens the way for beginning official negotiations on further reductions of Russian and United States strategic arsenals within the framework of a SALT-III Treaty. We are prepared to reduce our strategic offensive arms — of course, on a reciprocal basis with the United States — to a level lower than that provided for in the 1997 Russian-American agreement in Helsinki. To 1,500 warheads instead of 2,000-2,500.

The decision of the State Duma is a good, positive signal to the international community. As a great nuclear Power, the Russian Federation is demonstrating its responsibility by moving consistently in the direction of arms reduction and disarmament. We are setting an example of the practical fulfilment of the obligations assumed under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, thereby strengthening the regime established by that Treaty.

There is also another vitally important aspect of the decision adopted by the State Duma.

Recently, the world has been giving a great deal of attention to the problem of the proliferation of missiles and missile technology, and there has been talk of a growing so-called "missile threat" and of the need to take urgent measures to counteract that threat. One such measure, put forward by the United States, is the creation of a national anti-missile defence system, which is not in keeping with the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (the ABM Treaty).

We are in favour of taking measures, together with other States, to counteract the proliferation of missiles and missile technologies. In our opinion, however, this should not be done by violating existing disarmament agreements, particularly the ABM Treaty. We advocate another method, that of strengthening existing non-proliferation regimes and drafting new arms reduction treaties. The Russian Federation's ratification of the SALT-II Treaty is a concrete contribution to such efforts.

We hope that the United States will also make this constructive choice. The United States has yet to complete the ratification procedures that will enable SALT-II to enter into force, and to approve the package of agreements on anti-missile defence, which strengthen the 1972 Treaty. The success of the disarmament process and the formation of a political climate in the world depend predominantly on the actions taken by our two countries.